

REMARKS

The present application was filed on October 31, 2003, with claims 1-23, all of which remain pending. Claims 1, 22 and 23 are the independent claims.

The abstract is objected to due to informalities.

Claims 1-23 are indicated as containing allowable subject matter.

Claims 1, 4, 12-17, 19 and 21-23 are objected to due to informalities.

In this response, Applicants amend the abstract and claims 4, 6 and 11-17. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the application in view of the foregoing amendments and the remarks to follow.

The abstract has been amended to remove reference to acronyms, although the abstract was believed to be compliant in its original form.

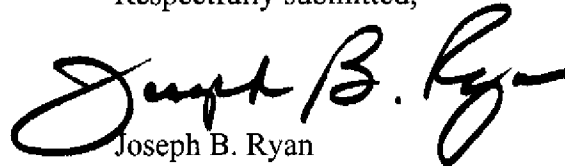
Applicants respectfully traverse the objection raised to the term “configured to” in conjunction with claims 1, 19 and 21-23. Applicants respectfully submit that the term in question is in fact a positive recitation. In any event, the term is not *per se* objectionable as is apparently alleged by the Examiner. Contrary to the assertion of the Examiner, there is no blanket prohibition against the use of such a term in a patent claim. Claims are considered to be definite, as required by the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. §112, when they define the metes and bounds of a claimed invention with a reasonable degree of precision and particularity. See In re Venezia, 530 F.2d 956, 958, 189 USPQ 149, 151 (CCPA 1976). In the present application, the scope of the claims which utilize the term in question can be ascertained with a reasonable degree of precision and particularity, and therefore the objection is believed to be improper and should be withdrawn.

Claim 4 has been amended to address the objection raised to that claim.

With regard to the objections to the acronyms used in claims 12-17, Applicants respectfully traverse on the ground that the acronyms in question are properly introduced and entirely clear in the claims as originally filed. Notwithstanding the traversal, the acronyms in question have been removed from claims 12-17, as well as from claims 6 and 11, solely in order to expedite prosecution of the application. In view of the above-noted traversal, Applicants respectfully submit that this amendment is not made for reasons relating to patentability, but is instead made to conform to a subjective preference of the Examiner.

In view of the foregoing, claims 1-23 as amended are believed to be in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph B. Ryan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Date: July 2, 2007

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